

Chapters Eight- Eleven

Judgment on this World for Their Sins and Their Persecution of His People

Will God permit such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

Certainly not. He is terribly angry about the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit. As a just judge he punishes them now and in eternity. He has declared: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 10

"And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18: 7- 8 NIV

Chapter 8: The Seventh Seal

Silence in Heaven: "Awed hush while God executes justice." Kistemaker, p. 266

(Also see: Isaiah 47:3, Ezekiel 27: 32, and Amos 8: 2- 3; Lam 2: 10- 11)

- Also spoken about in Jewish literature during the period between the Old and New Testaments as occurring at the end of history before God executes final judgment.
- In Daniel 4 4: 19 Daniel stands speechless "his thoughts troubled him" and he was "amazed about one hour" after hearing the dream foretelling Nebuchadnezzar's doom.
- Ties the final judgment mentioned in chapter 7 with temporal judgments God is about to unleash on this world

Seven Angels with the Seven Trumpets

- Identified with the seven archangels in Jewish apocalyptic writings
- Divine agents executing judgment
- Same time period as the seven seals (between the 1st and 2nd Comings)
- Judgments similar idea to the ten plagues that were sent on Egypt

Angel with censor at the altar bringing the prayers of the saints (all God's holy people washed in the blood of the lamb) before God, undoubtedly praying for justice.

God answers from the altar with fire, thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

The First Angel Sounds His Trumpet: (Revelation 8: 6- 7)

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. Rev. 8: 7 NIV

- Represents various natural disasters sent by God on the land (hail, fire, earthquakes, etc. also reminiscent of the blood and hail in the ten plagues)
- One third (symbolic)—not total destruction, but significant destruction
- Those upon whom they fall were not necessarily any guiltier than others and they were not necessarily a tit for tat for particular sins.
- Christians suffer along with the rest of the world.

The Second Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 8: 8- 9)

The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Rev 8: 8 NIV

- Mountains represent nations being destroyed (see Jeremiah 51: 25)
- Living creatures in the sea may represent the peoples in countries being killed in war.
- One third of ships destroyed Sea battles and hindrance of maritime commerce (also see Revelation 18: 17-b 10)

The Third Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 8: 10- 11)

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter. Rev. 8: 10 NIV

- Possibly represents the suffering that comes on the world because “its religious delusions on account of its rejection of the gospel. (Little, p. 85)
- The star may represent Satan and a fallen angel, who poisons “rivers of life” with false teachings.
- Wormwood is a bitter herb that can poison water and is also used throughout the Old Testament to refer to the bitterness of suffering brought on by judgment. (Deut. 29: 17- 18, Prov. 5: 4, Lam. 3: 15, 19, Amos 5: 7; 6: 12; Hosea 10: 4
- One third represents significant suffering, but not total suffering

The Fourth Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 8: 12- 13)

The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night. Rev. 8: 12 NIV

- Darkness is a reminder of the ninth plague sent on Egypt.
- In the apocryphal book Wisdom of Solomon, darkness is described as referring the captivity of darkness brought on by their sins “For when lawless people (the Egyptians) supposed that they held the holy nation in their power they themselves lay as captives of darkness and prisoners of the long night.” Wisdom 17: 2 NRSV It was a darkness that caused them to suffer from horror and fear. (Beale, p. 482)
- Darkness is symbolic of separation from God and of inevitable final condemnation in which they will live in eternal darkness.
- Changes in the sun, moon, and stars will cause grief, confusion, and fear.
- Eagle (vulture—bird looking for dead bodies) announces the three more woes that will fall upon the earth as the other trumpets are sounded.

The Fifth Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 9: 1- 12)

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill

them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them Rev. 9: 1- 6 NIV

- Falling star refers to Satan, who sends his demons to plague the earth
- Key represents the sovereignty he hold over those demons
- God and the Lamb have ultimate control, but they allow Satan and his demons to plague the earth as punishment for sin and for the persecution of the church.
- Smoke darkens the light, hence symbolizes judgment.
- The locusts which symbolize demons harm only unbelievers, inflicting spiritual harm and torment on them.
- “The locusts cause and reveal to the wicked the hunger and emptiness of their hearts.” (Beale p. 500)
- Remember the numbers are all symbolic. Five months—a limited amount of time (the length of the dry season, when locusts often came.)

The Sixth Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 9: 13- 11: 14)

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. Rev. 9: 13- 15 NIV

- Demons are commissioned to judge hardened unbelievers by ensuring the final punishment of some through deception until death, leaving them unrepentant. (Beale, p. 505)
- Even though many (1/3) were killed because of human folly, the rest (2/3) still did not believe.
- Think about World War 2 and secular Europe and the increasing secular United States, who worship idols of pleasure, science and technology, material gain, power, etc. This disastrous war resulted in many being hardened against the gospel.

¹Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. ²He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand...So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.” Rev. 10: 1-2, 9 NIV

- Scroll symbolized the gospel
- “The Gospel is in itself glorious and sweet, but its proclamation is ever followed by bitter persecution.” (Hendriksen, p. 151)
- Chapter 11: 1- 14 gives “the bitter experiences, which the true church must endure when it preaches the sweet gospel of salvation.” (Hendriksen, p. 152)
- John’s measuring the temple: (See Zechariah 2.) Those in the temple are the “true church,” the true Israel, who will be saved; those outside are the false church,” who will be taken over by the world and by worldly ideas. Just as in Rev. 7 where we find that all true believers are numbered, so here they are measured.
- The two witnesses symbolize those in the church who witness to others of the truth of the gospel*. Two olive trees: true church (Romans 11) and two lampstands: true witness to the world (Revelation 1)

- Recalling the power of Elijah (shut up the sky, so that it will not rain) and Moses (turn waters into blood and strikes the earth with every kind of plague); these two witnesses have the power to condemn those who do not repent.
- They are killed as “the world” rejoices-- Certainly recalls the crowds who watched the Christians being killed in the arena, but also could refer to how the world assassinates the character of true Christians who proclaim the truth today.
- But, they came to life (v. 11) showing that the world cannot destroy the truth of the gospel.
- Collapsing of a tenth of the city: another reminder that Christ will exact judgment on those who persecute his witnesses.

The Seventh Angel Sounds His Trumpet (Revelation 11: 15- 19)

¹⁵The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” Rev. 11: 15 NIV

- Clearly the seventh trumpet marks the end of the world and the new heaven and earth.
- Time when all who oppose Christ and his church are judged and the church is vindicated.